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A Pilot Study on Organizational Commitment and Work Motivation of Employees from Generation Y and Generation Z

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Abstract

Contemporary workplaces are filled with employees from different work cohorts working together. Among these work cohorts, employees from generation Y and those from generation Z form the largest workforce in India today. The following study was intrigued by an interest in a probability of diversity of work-related attitudes of these generations and the dynamics of its interplay in the workplaces. Out of numerous work-related attitudes, work motivation and organizational commitment of employees were chosen as variables to be measured among these generations and an attempt was made to check if there are any differences and conflicts arising out of them. Primary data was collected by using questionnaires which are highly reliable, valid and standardized.

As predicted, the findings demonstrated significant differences in the level of intrinsic motivation of employees from both the generations. Results also indicated a significant difference between the level of most types of organizational commitment. there was no significant difference found in the level of extrinsic motivation and continuance commitment among these generations. Gender variability among these attitudes was also studied as an additional variable. In all the findings could pave ways to generate strategies to leverage upon the generational diversity and maximising the overall productivity of organizations by using unique and suitable motivational strategies for its varied workforce.

Keywords: Work Cohorts, Generation Y, Generation Z, Motivation, Organizational commitment

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the dramatic challenges which organizations face is that of managing diversity in the workplace with employees of different cultures, backgrounds, gender, educational levels, and sexual orientations working under the same roof. Diversity refers to any compositional

differences among people within a work unit (Roberson, 2019). Leveraging on workplace diversity and managing it effectively has become an important concern for managements in the present era. A homogeneous workforce is more likely to come up with routine solutions to the problems faced which may not be sufficient in a national and world market which is characterized by employees from many races, religions, and nationalities (Armache, 2012). The collective wisdom of any workforce is boosted by accommodating people with varied experiences and backgrounds. Firms that want to produce designs need to hire employees from different backgrounds (Armache, 2012).

Out of all the factors work cohort or generation in which the employees belong to has been found to impact employee values, many work-related attitudes, values (Ettis, 2022) and behaviours including organizational commitment (Marsden, Kalleberg, & Cook, 1993), employee engagement, managerial behaviours (Posner & Munson, 1981), deviant behaviours (Hayward, 2022), motivation to name a few. The present research is aimed at exploring dynamics of generational diversity in the workplace in the context of values held by the employees, their commitment level, motivating determinants and the like.

Concepts from the Study

1.1 Work cohort or Generations

The 'Theory of Generations' was articulated by Karl Mannheim (1928) which is still regarded as the most systematic and fully developed theory to study variations in generations or cohorts (as cited by Popescu, 2019). According to the theory, perspectives of maturing youth and their social consciousness is prominently influenced by the major historical events of a particular era. The studies on differences in generations mostly consists of studies pertaining to the Western perspectives. While generational differences are prevalent across the globe, the characterization of generations remains unique to a given society, as the differences in any society are moulded by socio-economic, political, and cultural proceedings which are likely to be specific to that context. However, considering Mannheim's perspective, generational identities have an influence of socio-political and cultural outlook as well as impact of the critical historical events (Malik, 2018). Thus, it is difficult to generalize an American or global classification for a much diverse, developing nation like India which has gone through significantly different curve of economic growth, and varied socio-political scenarios post-independence.

Unique features of generations in India

a) Generation Y (1981-1995)

This generation witnessed rapid development including suburbanization and increased demand and supply of consumer goods, stability and prosperity in the economy, educationally developed with IT talent and fast developing companies with global rankings. This generation played a key role in recalibrating the reputation of our nation on a universal demographic sphere (Malik, 2018). It transformed the earlier conception of the country as a land of snake charmers, poverty and Mother Teresa to a hub of technological experts and avid scholars. India was further modified with the economic reforms of 1991 and was recognized among the fastest expanding economies in the

world. The youth of this generation was inherently progressive with inkling towards latest games, technologies, and devices. Employees from generation Y in India have been found to be impatient, flexible and open to diversities, appreciative of democracy (Malik, 2018). Employee aspiration amplified with this generation as they don't mind a rotation of employers if it helps in advancing their careers. Additionally, they normally prefer opportunities that suit their progress requirements for instance, prospects of working globally (Rajesh & Ekambaram, 2014). Gen Y's were found to be technobright, optimistic and more into challenging the authorities (Ekambaram & Rajesh, 2014). Gen Y also reported significantly higher discrepancy in person-organization fit values than previous generations. (Samuel & Rani, 2016).

b) Generation Z (1995-2009)

Generation Z from India does share common characteristics with their global counterparts, yet they represent a unique blend of traditional values and modern influences. They were brought up by their parent from generation X who could reap the benefits of globalization, increased technical proficiency and open economy. Thus, they have a notable access to information, communication and entertainment. Social media has been found to be a huge influencing force in generation Z's decisions about financial planning, political and ideological preferences and health and wellness.

Despite global influence, Indian generation Z is strongly rooted in their cultural heritage thereby exhibiting a balance between tradition and modernity. Compared to previous generations, this generation in India has shown a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a desire for social change. They are not hesitant to choose unconventional career paths and responding well to government schemes like 'Mudra Yojana' and 'Make in India' initiatives. Though education still remains a priority for most from generation Z, many consider holistic development as their primary aim.

1.2 Organizational Commitment

One of the important major job-related attitudes found among employees is organizational commitment. "It is the degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization" (Robbins & Judge, 2003). Workplace commitment can further be separated into different aspects. Employees may be committed to career, occupation, goals, teams, leaders or organization as such. Organizational commitment is likely to predict work variables including organizational citizenship behavior, job performance, and turnover to some extent (Chib, 2016). Some other factors such as distribution of leadership, empowerment, role stress, employability, and job insecurity have been shown to be connected to a worker's sense of organizational commitment.

Three-component model of commitment

One of the most widely used theories in organizational commitment is three-component model given by John Meyer and Natalie Allen in 1991. Generally, employees who are committed to their organisation feel that they fit in, form a rapport with their organisation, and understand the goals of the company. The supplementary value of such employees is that they show relatively high productivity, are more active in offering their support, tend to be more staunch in

their work, and. In their article ‘Three component model of commitment’ Allen and Meyer (1991) discuss organisational commitment in great detail.

To enhance the understanding of organizational commitment, Allen and Meyer (1991) expanded beyond the existing categorization of attitudinal and behavioral commitment. They proposed three distinct and separable types of organizational commitment:

- i. Affective commitment, which entails a desire to remain with the organization. When employees are affectively committed, it indicates that they have a strong desire to continue working for their organization. They typically feel a sense of belonging within the organization, align with its goals, and experience satisfaction in their work. They eagerly anticipate their workday and view their workplace as an integral part of their life. These employees are often the first to volunteer for additional responsibilities or extracurricular activities.
- ii. Continuance commitment, which involves a perceived need to stay with the organization. For employees with high continuance commitment, the underlying reason lies in their need to stay with the organisation. Some of the possible, reasons relate to a lack of work alternatives, and remuneration. Continuance organizational commitment is stronger when personal interests in the current role are higher than the perceived profits of a new job offer (Wang et al., 2010 as cited by Chigeda et.al. 2022).
- iii. Normative commitment, which represents a sense of obligation to remain employed within the organization. Employees with high normative commitment tend to believe that they should stay with their organizations. They feel a sense of duty or obligation to remain employed there. Normatively committed employees believe that they ought to continue working for their organization due to the benefits or support received from it. They perceive leaving their organization as carrying a significant cost and may experience feelings of guilt at the thought of departing.

1.3 Work Motivation

Motivation is defined by Craig Pinder (1998), as “a set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration.” Motivation is inherently subjective and unique. What motivates one person may not necessarily motivate others. This distinction is especially pertinent in the workplace context. Work motivation is thus linked to factors that inspire, guide, energize, and reinforce work performance to achieve organizational goals.

A theory which offers more comprehensive view by going beyond this dichotomy is Self-Determination Theory by Ryan and Desi (2000). It proposed that people prefer to feel they have control over their actions, so anything that makes a previously enjoyed task feel more like an obligation than a freely chosen activity will undermine motivation (Robbins & Judge 2015). A significant portion of research within organizational behavior regarding self-determination theory has centred on cognitive evaluation theory. This theory suggests that extrinsic rewards may diminish intrinsic interest in a task. When individuals are compensated for their work, it may feel less like something they genuinely want to do and more like an obligation. Self-determination theory also posits that, apart from the need for autonomy, individuals strive for

competence and positive connections with others. Conditions that support an individual's sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are argued to foster the most genuine and high-quality forms of motivation and engagement in activities.

SDT is generally applicable to actions that individuals find integrally stimulating, challenging, or artistically pleasing. Activities such as work, which may not be experienced as inherently satisfying, are unlikely to be pursued except if there is some external reason motivating them (Deci & Ryan, 2002 as cited by Tremblay 2009). Consequently, SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, where individuals engage in an activity for its own sake because they find it inherently satisfying, and extrinsic motivation, where individuals engage in an activity for instrumental reasons. Extrinsic motivation can vary in terms of its level of autonomy, ranging from relatively controlled by external factors to relatively self-regulated based on an individual's acquired goals and values. These different types of motivation can be positioned along a continuum, reflecting the degree to which values or goals have been internalized.

At the lowest point of the continuum lies amotivation (AMO), where individuals exhibit a lack of intention to act or display inert behavior. Following this is external regulation (ER), characterized by engaging in an activity solely for the sake of obtaining rewards or avoiding negative consequences. Next is introjected regulation (INTRO), which involves regulating behavior to bolster self-worth or evade feelings of guilt. Identified regulation (IDEN) comes next, referring to engaging in an activity because one identifies with its meaning or value and considers it their own. Finally, integrated regulation (INTEG) is where individuals identify so strongly with the value of an activity that it becomes part of their sense of self. This form of extrinsic motivation is fully internalized and deemed autonomous. Identification, integration, and intrinsic motivation are examples of self-determined motivations, while amotivation, external regulation, and introjection fall into the category of non-self-determined motivations. SDT does not presuppose that the self-determination continuum follows a developmental trajectory where individuals progress through specific stages. Instead, a new behavior may be internalized at any point along the continuum, influenced by factors such as an employee's past experiences or organizational policies and context (Ryan, 1995).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mann and Shrivastava (2023) examined differences in two generations- Gen Y and Gen Z on some variables which can affect employee behaviour and team performance. The variables which they studied were core self-evaluation, team cohesion, organizational culture and team performance. The researchers adopted cross-sectional survey method where data was collected from 370 Indian employees from various organizations. The researchers found that there were significant differences in core self-evaluation, team cohesion and organizational culture. Also, it was found that these three factors are positively correlated with team performance and also act as its determinants. But no significant difference was found in actual work performance of these two generations.

Dokadia and Palo (2022) studied perceptions of practitioners on managing generational differences at workplace. 30 HR managers from varied organisations from Delhi and Mumbai were participants in the study. Seven crucial elements emerged from the discussion where human resource managers must deal with while handling a work-team comprised of multiple generations: 'understanding the generational markers unique to the Indian context', 'understanding generational groups' perspectives on 'career', 'learning', 'leadership',

‘communication and technology’, ‘attitudes towards work’ and ‘understanding generational differences in blue-collared workers’. Rather than focusing on the conflicts and tensions produced by generational differences, acknowledging and gaining from them would facilitate managers to deal with these differences in a rewarding style.

Robinson (2017) conducted a qualitative single case study to explore leadership strategies used by federal government managers to deal with a multigenerational workforce. Since it was a qualitative study, the research methods used included ethnography, narrative, phenomenology and case study. The conceptual framework was based on Kahn’s theory of employee engagement and generations cohort theory. Training programs, enhanced communication and team building were found to be the most effective strategies for the same. (Robinson, S. 2017).

Sturt and Nordstrom (2016) illuminated the significant generational differences within organizations. It was noted that certain factors varied in importance among employees based on their generational cohort. A higher percentage of Generation Ys (55%) compared to baby boomers (39%) believed that team consensus should play a significant role in the decision-making process, while Gen X employees were the most likely to consider consensus crucial (61%). Baby boomers were the least likely of all generations to believe that the boss knows best when making business decisions, followed closely by Generation Ys. Despite these differences, some similarities were also identified in preferences across generations, such as a desire for flexible working hours and the aspiration to make an impact.

Crampton and Hodge (2009) explored the working styles, preferences and needs of Gen Y employees by referring to them as ‘Unchartered Territory’. The authors notes that generation Y has been raised by giving constant feedback and praise. Employers are concerned that this reality sets unrealistic expectations for organizations. Younger workers exhibit a distinct communication style, and motivating them through fear is a strategy disliked by all generations, particularly younger workers (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). Given that younger workers hold high opinions of themselves and desire comprehensive benefits, mentoring becomes crucial in aiding their transition into the corporate environment. Generation Y prioritizes career development and promotions based on skills rather than seniority (Healy, 2008 as cited by Crampton & Hodge, 2009). According to Generation Y, the ideal boss is flexible and empowering, as younger workers value independence and resist micromanagement.

Eisner (2005) examined employees of Gen Y in the context of Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation while working in virtual teams. The aim of this descriptive study was to investigate the motivating factors of Generation Y virtual team members and their influence on the organization, based on Herzberg’s two-factor theory. The participants included Generation Y members in Lakeland, Florida. The study findings revealed that Generation Y individuals attributed significant importance to hygiene as well as motivator factors as a part of their motivational needs. Growth and work-life balance were identified as key priorities for Generation Y participants. Managers need to adopt a flexible managerial approach when dealing with Generation Y workers (Eisner, 2005).

Jena (2016) characterized Generation Y employees as exhibiting a higher normative commitment to the organization compared to Generation X employees, whereas Generation X employees demonstrated a higher continuance commitment to the organization than Generation Y employees. However, the study also found that there was no significant difference in affective commitment between older and younger generations.

Guha and Barua (2011) have classified various assets of Organizational Commitment, generational differences being one of them. Differences in organizational commitment were observed among different generations. Generation Y employees demonstrated a commitment to the organization itself, in contrast to the commitment towards individual managers, characterized by idealistic values and human spirit, exhibited by Generation X employees (Alexander & Sysko, 2009). For the modern generation, commitment was defined in terms of the quality of work and achievements, rather than tenure or years of service.

Bulut and Culha (2010) conducted empirical research to study the impact of training on organizational commitment of employees focusing on their affective responses towards the organization. Field research involving 298 service professionals was conducted to assess the hypothesis. The results indicated that all aspects of training positively influenced organizational commitment. Furthermore, the study emphasized that organizations that invest more in training and human resources stand to gain a significant competitive edge by retaining talented and committed employees.

Zhoa and colleagues (2022) investigated how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation dynamics influence three facets of organizational commitment. They discovered that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation had a positive impact on affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Interestingly, intrinsic motivation exhibited a stronger positive effect than extrinsic motivation. However, the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation negatively predicted all three dimensions of organizational commitment.

Salleh et.al (2016) studied the influence of work motivation on organizational commitment of employees in the workplace. The authors hypothesized a significant positive correlation between work motivation and organizational commitment among employees. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect data from 70 engineers working in a private company. Findings suggested a strong positive correlation (0.72) between work motivation and organizational commitment. Thus, employees who scored high on work motivation also scored high on employee commitment and vice-versa.

Dhaliwal (2016) studied motivation as a continuous process which help employees achieve their goals. The study also predicted a positive correlation between employee motivation and job satisfaction of employees. The author reiterated some findings to leverage motivating factors to help employees achieve personal growth, enhance creativity and improve customer satisfaction and overall job performance.

Altindis (2011) investigated the correlation between organizational commitment and motivation among healthcare professionals. The research investigated the organizational commitment levels of healthcare professionals, focusing on emotional, continuance, and normative commitment. It also examined their motivation levels in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The results showed that intrinsic motivation among healthcare professionals was predominantly influenced by affective and normative commitment. Additionally, the impact of affective and normative commitment on intrinsic motivation was stronger than that of continuance commitment.

Aslan et al. (2011) conducted research to assess the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors on employee motivation and to compare these effects based on employees' demographic characteristics. The study surveyed 41 participants using a modified questionnaire. The results

indicated that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence employees in achieving their goals. Additionally, the study found that intrinsic factors were more motivating than extrinsic factors.

Mottaz (1988) conducted a study centered on the concept of work values and rewards, examining their influences on organizational commitment. Data was gathered from 1385 employees, revealing that work rewards exerted a robust positive influence on commitment, whereas work values had a relatively weaker negative impact. Additionally, the results suggested that intrinsic rewards were considerably more influential determinants of commitment compared to extrinsic rewards.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

1. To compare the level of affective, normative and continuance organizational commitment of employees from Generation Y and generation Z.
2. To compare the level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees from Generation Y and generation Z.

3.2 Hypotheses

- H1 There is a difference among employees from Generation Y and Generation Z in the level of affective, normative and continuance organizational commitment respectively.
- H2 There is a difference among employees from Generation Y and Generation Z in the level of intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation respectively.

3.3 Variables in the Study

Independent Variable:

Work cohorts based on employees born in different years. Two levels of the independent variable are:

- a. Generation Y (1981-1995)
- b. Generation Z (1996 onwards)

Dependent Variables:

- a) Affective, normative and continuance organizational commitment among employees from Generation Y and Generation Z.
- b) Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees from Generation Y and Generation Z.

Control variables

- a) There would be nearly equal no. of participants from every work cohort.
- b) A care would be taken to choose nearly equal no. of male and female participants in order to minimize selection bias.

- c) All the questionnaires will be explained neatly to all the participants along with instructions and demonstration.
- d) Graduation in any stream and a range of 1-10 years of experience will be selection criteria for the participants.
- e) Participants will have a choice in terms of revealing their identity in order to control social desirability effect while answering the questions.
- f) No time limit will be imposed for any of the questionnaires.

3.4 Method

Sample

150 employees working in diverse work sectors with the following selection criteria-

- 75 employees belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z each.
- Graduation as minimum qualification
- Work experience ranging from 1-10 years

Non-probability sampling will be used in order to collect the data from available employees from said companies.

Description of Tools

- a) Demographic details of participants-Self-constructed information scale
- b) Variable: Organizational commitment
A Three-Component Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Allen and Meyer (1990)
- c) Variable: Work Motivation
Work Extrinsic Intrinsic Motivation Scale by Tremblay et.al. (2009).

Research Design

Randomized measure design in which there is one independent variable of work cohort with two levels, Generation Y and generation Z. Appropriate statistical tests were applied taking factors like normality into consideration.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data was collected by meeting the participants and properly explaining them the instructions for both the questionnaires. They were also told to fill the demographic information with their right to withhold their identities if they wished so.

4.1 Organizational Commitment

In the Three-Component scale, affective, continuance and normative commitment is measured by a rating scale of 8 items dedicated to each of them. The more strongly a participant agrees with a statement, the more attachment s/he is presumed to have with the organization.

Table no 1. Comparison of Organizational Commitment for Generation Y and Generation Z

	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
GENERATION Y	41.22	36.76	35.72
GENERATION Z	34.68	34.1	33.66

Mean values for affective, continuance and normative commitment for the generation Y were found to be greater than those of generation Z. The variance for generation Y measured by SD was found to be highest for continuance commitment for (8), followed by affective commitment (6.4) and lowest for normative commitment (4.9). For generation Z, highest variance was found in affective commitment (6.15) but variance for continuance commitment (3.37) and normative commitment (3.77) was found to be almost equal. In all, the data for generation z was found to be more homogenous.

A normality test was conducted to determine the appropriate inferential statistical test. Normative commitment was the only variable which passed the normality criteria. Affective and continuance commitment violated the same and as a result, different types of tests were used to find the difference.

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

	W	p
NC	0.991	0.491
CC	0.960	< .001
AC	0.969	0.002

Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p
Normative Commitment	Student's t	2.82 ^a	148	0.005

Note. $H_a \mu_Y \neq \mu_Z$

A significant difference was found in the levels of normative commitment of employees from generation Y and generation Z according to Independent Samples t test.

Since for the variables of affective and continuance commitment there was unequal variance, Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare them among the two groups of generations.

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	p
Affective Commitment	Mann-Whitney U	1247	< .001
Continuance Commitment	Mann-Whitney U	2053	0.004

Note. $H_a \mu_Y \neq \mu_Z$

A significant difference was found in the level of affective as well as continuance commitment in the employees of generation Y and generation Z with affective commitment showing a greater impact of the independent variable.

Thus, H_1 was retained as a significant difference was found in employees from generation Y and generation Z in affective, continuance and normative commitment respectively and H_0 is rejected.

4.2 Work Motivation

The variables of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were measured on a rating scale with 9 items each corresponding to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation facets. Higher the score on these items, higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation an employee was presumed to possess.

Table 2. Comparison of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation for Generation Y and Generation Z

	Intrinsic Commitment	Extrinsic Commitment
GENERATION Y	54.73	50.46
GENERATION Z	42.57	45

Overall, generation Z scored lower in both the components of intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation compared to generation Y. Generation Y was found to be more heterogenous for the component of extrinsic motivation (9.31) compared to intrinsic motivation (8.23). In case of generation Z, more deviation was found in intrinsic motivation (6.15) compared to extrinsic motivation (3.37).

When subjected to test for normality, the variable of intrinsic motivation couldn't satisfy the criteria whereas for extrinsic motivation, the data was found to be normally distributed.

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)		
	W	p
Intrinsic Motivation	0.977	0.013
Extrinsic Motivation	0.988	0.247

Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

Thus, Independent Samples t test was used to compare the scores on extrinsic motivation whereas, Mann Whitney U test was conducted to compare the scores on intrinsic motivation.

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p
Intrinsic Motivation	Mann-Whitney U	539		< .001

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p
Extrinsic Motivation	Student's t	3.82	148	< .001

Note. $H_a \mu_Y \neq \mu_Z$

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Both the groups of generations showed a significant difference in the levels of intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation according to the analysis.

Thus, H_0 was rejected and H_1 was retained with respect to the variables of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for the two generations.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly demarked the boundaries between job related attitudes of generation Y and generation Z. Especially influential attitudes like organizational commitment and intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation seemed to differ according to the work cohort which employees belonged to. Soon employees from generation Y will be occupying decision-making places in different organizations and they will have to deal with large no of employees form generation Z joining as their subordinates or colleagues. It is important for both the generations to be aware about this diversity in their respective attitudes. New-age managers will have to leverage upon this diversity and use suitable tactics for motivating employees from newer generations to maximise job performance.

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ANNEXURE

Table 1. Comparison of Organizational Commitment between Generations

Generation	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Generation Y	39.15	33.6	35.8
Generation Z	32.45	31.6	32.2

Table 2. Comparison of Work Motivation between Generations

Generation	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation	Overall Motivation
Generation Y	61.1	43.8	24
Generation Z	54	40.3	19